



Security Council

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Letter dated 23 May 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter dated 23 May 2014 from the Special Representative of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces addressed to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons concerning new allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah on 22 May 2014 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the attached letter from the Special Representative of the Syrian National Coalition circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Alexis Lamek
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 23 May 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires
a.i. of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations
addressed to the President of the Security Council**

[Original: English]

On behalf of the people of Syria and the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, I would like to draw your attention to three new chemical weapons attacks which took place yesterday in the towns of Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah and the urgent need for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fact-finding mission to be dispatched to these locations.

On the morning and evening of Thursday, 22 May, Syrian regime aerial forces bombarded the towns of Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah with explosive barrels loaded with toxic chemical gases. Video footage of the incidents provides clear and conclusive evidence that these explosions produced thick yellow-coloured smoke, consistent with the deployment of chlorine gas. Victims at both scenes reported symptoms which included choking.

As you are aware, the use of chlorine gas as a weapon of war constitutes a war crime, as defined by the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed in Geneva on 17 June 1925, and to which Syria acceded on 22 November 1968. It also represents a direct violation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), in which Security Council members unanimously and explicitly prohibited the Syrian regime from further use of chemical weapons.

You recently reported to the OPCW Executive Council that the OPCW fact-finding mission on allegations of use of chlorine gas in Syria has begun to prepare for on-site activities in Syria. Given yesterday's revelations, it is vital that the mission verify the chlorine attacks of 22 May and act without delay to dispatch monitors to Kafr Zita and Al Tamanah. Immediate verification is needed to determine with certainty the veracity of these attacks.

It is also critical that the mission be empowered to determine the party responsible for ordering these illegal chemical assaults. OPCW must make clear that those responsible for chemical weapons attacks will be identified and ultimately be brought to justice for their atrocities. Anything less than a clear designation of responsibility by OPCW will allow such crimes to continue and risks setting a precedent for further chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

The Syrian Coalition and its partner, the Free Syrian Army, remain committed to cooperating fully with the OPCW mission. As always, we stand ready to assist OPCW monitors in gaining full and immediate access to Kafr Zita and Al Tan.anah.

(Signed) **Najib Ghadbian**
Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition to the United Nations